

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 92.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1855.

PRICE 1½d.

THE FORTUNATE SHOP.

MANY years ago—it must be more than forty by this time—there stood, at the corner of a lane in the heart of the city of London, a dim, dusty-looking house, of some thirty feet frontage, upon which the sun rarely shone, save for a few hours in the afternoon, and which you might pass a hundred times, so unpretentious was its aspect, without noticing its existence. It had two windows, with a broad space of brown brick-wall between them, on the ground-floor; and when the scaled and blistered shutters, which once were green, were thrown open, as they were every morning about eight o'clock, you might have seen an elderly maiden personage sitting at the smaller one, behind a white muslin blind, hemming the frill of a cap, stitching the wristband of a shirt, or darning woollen hose. At the other and larger window, the blind was of green gauze, very faded and worn, and did not half conceal the figure of a lean, invalid-looking man, of about fifty, who stood behind a sort of counter, covered with padded felt, polishing now a silver salver, now a soup-tureen of the same metal, by the friction of his bare palm. Sometimes two or three pale lads wrought with him at the same silent labour; and if you had entered at the private door—whose knocker was half confined with a staple driven into the panel to prevent your alarming the nerves of the proprietor by indulging in a thundering rap—and had ascended to the floor above, you might have found a party of young girls preparing with their soft hands more work of the same kind for the finishing-touches of the master. The lane in which the house of the plate-polisher stood, had been once a solitary *cul-de-sac*, leading to nowhere, and compelling all explorers after a north-west passage to retrace their steps; but a few years before the time of which we speak, the pulling down of some old houses at the end of it had converted the *cul-de-sac* into a 'short-cut' and much-used thoroughfare between two or more of the most busy and populous haunts of commerce. In consequence, the lane began to assume an appearance of more liveliness and importance: there was scrubbing and washing, and painting of fronts, pointing of bricks, enlarging of front-windows, and the conversion of dingy front-parlours and neglected warehouses into sprightly-looking shops. But the plate-polisher made no alteration—did not even renew the old green blind, pumice-stone his blistered shutters, or bestow a little of his craft on the rusty knocker of his door. Rusty as it was, however, death did not disdain to lift it with his skeleton fingers; he sounded his summons in the middle of the night, and the next morning the shutters were not thrown open, but the

blinds of the upper windows were drawn down, and there was no more 'plate-polishing done here' from that day forth. For a few weeks, the old maiden-lady, shrouded in bombazine and crape, might be seen occasionally flitting about the premises, and then she vanished from the neighbourhood.

She was no sooner gone, than up rose a hoarding of lofty planks in front of the old house, begirt with a planked footway for passengers, and, in less time than you could imagine, stuck all over with posters of lottery-bills in all the colours of the rainbow, and with announcements of a hundred different kinds, laid on so thick, that you might as well think of looking through a millstone, as of obtaining by a furtive peep any hint of what was going on within. However, the lane didn't care much about it, and manifested no remarkable curiosity. Old gentlemen who dropped into the little tavern, three doors off, in the morning, to discuss the current-prices and the gooseberry-brandy, tiffed at the hoarding as it brought them up suddenly; and hasty messengers, availing themselves of the short-cut, found it all the longer for the temporary obstruction. But the hoarding flew off one Saturday night, and displayed to the Sunday gazers a handsome set of new shutters, surmounted by a Corinthian cornice, and a new private door, splendid in imitative walnut and shining varnish. When the shutters came down on Monday morning, they disclosed a handsome mahogany sash, the two lower rows of panes guarded by a stout trellis-work of brass-wire, resting upon a single plate of brass, inscribed in the centre with the name of the new proprietor, John Cambit. Behind the wire-work and the glass, lay scattered in careless profusion, as though Cambit didn't value it a straw, an absolute mine of wealth. There were big-bodied wooden bowls, positively split at the sides with the weight of old English guineas, every one of which was worth seven-and-twenty shillings apiece—there were louis-d'ors, just as plentiful, from France—bulging piles of yellow ducats from Spain—bursting bags of rupees from India—and huge bars and solid ingots of the precious gold heaped in pyramids, ready for the Mint. As for silver, it lay in masses like so much rubbish beneath the golden store, and seemed to invite the shovel of the scavenger to clear it away. Then, scattered like scraps of waste-paper over all, were the notes of all nations, promises to pay, scrip, coupons, bonds and securities, and everything in the shape of a marketable pledge for untold sums and fabulous amounts of wealth. Cambit meant business, that was plain; and he did business too; for the new shop became a sort of shrine for the luckier tribes of Israel, who were continually going in and out, and for travellers, besides, from all parts of Europe. How long

Cambit dwelt in the lane, we don't exactly recollect; but we found him unexpectedly one morning promoted to Lombard Street; and on passing the old shop in the afternoon, beheld the identical boards upon which his masses of bullion had reposed, occupied by a dozen or so of wig-blocks, all in a row.

These were days, be it remembered, when wigs were wigs, and no trifles; and when Finnigan bought Cambit's lease, and went into the lane in the wig-line, he knew what he was about. If gentlemen of substance in those days succumbed to Time, they had too much pluck to allow the bald-pated old mower to be conscious of his triumph. As for parading his victory and their own defeat in the shape of a bunch of gray whiskers on each side of the face, the generality of them would as soon have thought of suicide. As yet, whiskers were not—and the trade of the barber was anything but the mere pretence it is now. The whole face was shaven clean as wax-work every morning, and the unborn beard cropped out of existence before it could betray its colour, whether red, white, or blue. Heads scant of hair mounted a scalp cunningly devised to match the natural hue; heads totally bald went into wigs; and not a few of the heads maturely or prematurely grizzled or gray did the same. Full-bottoms were out, except for official purposes; but Brutuses were in, and a decent Brutus cost five guineas, and considered cheap at that; and if you were extravagant enough, you might go as high as ten or fifteen guineas—Finnigan often had fifteen guineas. His chefs-d'œuvre were real master-pieces, and, as he was wont to declare, far more natural than the real hair. To look at them, you would rather have thought that the wearer's head did not belong to his shoulders, than that the wig did not belong to the head. Finnigan was a scientific man, and not only had his wigs woven under his own eye, but grew his own hair. He had a talpa-farm in Brittany, where a whole district of Celtic damsels were under his sway, and bound down not to part with a single lock or ringlet to any one but him. Every autumn, he crossed the Channel in person, gathered his crop, and brought it home in readiness for winter-orders. He never troubled himself with the operative tonsorial department, or the supplementary trade of combs, brushes, perfumery, and cutlery. All that he left to his foreman and assistants, concentrating the whole force of his superior mind upon the wigs and their welfare. Of course, he made a fortune. It was not in the nature of things that, with his genius, he should do otherwise. He retired rather suddenly, disgusted with the too coarse innovation of horse-tails upon the magisterial head, and built himself a neat villa at Wighampton, where he spent the remainder of his days peacefully.

The world is full of contrasts. The next tenant of the Fortunate Shop was the very antithesis of Finnigan, and was no other than little Pounce, the notary and law-stationer, who had an utter contempt for wigs, and wore his own head as bald as one of Finnigan's own blocks. Polished and shining, his little round pate was seen, on a gloomy day, glimmering in the darkness of the shop like the red round moon in the fog of a November night. He filled his window with bodkins, spikes, and circular pricklers; with bundles of red-tape and sealing-wax, and round and flat rulers; with ink-stands, and pencils, and India-rubber, and bundles of cut quill-pens, with their noses baptised in ink; with bottles of Walkden's best Japan and Scots blue; with reams of copy-paper and rolls of vellum; and huge sheets of parchment, with *This Indenture* and a blue stamp at the upper left-hand corner. Instead of a blind, he hung whole fathoms of engrossed vellum across a brass rod, and there he sat at a desk behind them, ploughing away with his pen, and spelling every word, as he wrote it, with his lips, so plainly that one might almost read from his grimaces as easily as from his

writing: when he did write, that is to say, which was not oftener than he could help, and only when all his clerks were fully engaged. Pounce came into the world to rub his hands, and he never seemed to do anything else with such thorough good-will and energy. He must have used whole tons of Hood's 'invisible soap,' and oceans of 'imperceptible water;' for he rubbed from morning to night the moment his fingers quitted their grasp of anything. He rubbed when he was taking an order, or giving directions for its execution; he rubbed while waiting for his dinner at the chop-house, and laid down his knife and fork to rub a dozen times during its consumption; he rubbed half the time he was serving a customer, and all the time that there were no customers to serve, and nothing else to occupy his hands. Of course, he rubbed on, and got on, as his predecessors had done in the Fortunate Shop. When he went away, it was into larger premises, fitted to accommodate a larger staff, and situated somewhat nearer 'Change.

After Pounce came Pungent, the pickle-dealer, who blocked up the window with bottles and jars, and preserve-pots and neats' tongues and dried salmon, and a shoal of other savoury and relishing etceteras; and covered the floor with tubs and barrels and kegs, and amphore; and did a wonderful trade among the diners and givers of dinners, and lovers of good eating, with which the city abounds. Then he made the grand discovery of a new fish-sauce, and blazoned it abroad, even to the ends of the earth; and had to enlarge his premises by buying out the newsman next door, and throwing both houses into one, to make room for his increasing trade. Over all the wide world flew the renowned Pungent Sauce—to India, to China, to Valparaiso, to the furthest skirts of civilisation, and beyond; and brought gold in heaps to Pungent's pocket. And ever the demand increased as the hunger of the nations grew with that it fed on; till Pungent, out of sheer compassion to the human race in general, and to aristocratic eaters in particular, had to turn out of the narrow lane into a grand establishment further west, and consummate his destiny by devoting himself solely to the satisfaction of the universal clamour for the immortal sauce.

Who it was that first occupied the shop after Pungent had departed, we cannot state with certainty. We think it was a jeweller, who, to the usual traffic in the emblems of modern vanity, added a commerce in old coins, old cameos, intaglios, statuettes in precious metal, and everything curious and diminutive in the world of ancient art. Besides him, we recollect a fruiterer, who made a magnificent display of melons and pine-apples, and hot-house grapes at a crown a pound, and all the horticultural delicacies of the season, collected from the home or foreign nurseries. He was a bold speculative fellow, who didn't care what price he paid for the best articles: he knew his market, and kept such an astounding show of luxuries ever on hand as put Covent Garden to the blush. He found the lane a short-cut to the Mansion House, and soon had to furnish the deserts at all the civic feasts—sending in bills of three figures after a single banquet. He was Alderman Somebody when he retired to his seat in Surrey; and very likely was Lord Mayor Somebody as well, when his turn came.

We need not charge ourselves with the narrative of the career of every man who had the good-luck to get into the Fortunate Shop, and find it a short-cut, as they all did, to prosperity and competence; but must hasten on to the climax of its history, which is not far off.

At the end of the lane, where he had lived ever since it had been converted from a cul-de-sac to a thoroughfare, dwelt Mr Christopher Cinnamon, who got his living, and brought up a family of five respectably, by exercising the trade of a grocer. Kit, who was a sleek, quiet, observant fellow, had long had his eye on the

Fortunate Shop, and more than once had made an unsuccessful bid for the lease, whose expiry was yet far off, and which was renewable, at the option of the tenant, for twenty-one years. About nine years ago, however, having compassed a little money by a prudent speculation in nutmegs, he astonished the whole lane by outbidding all competitors, and purchasing the lease at a price which set them a speculating on the man's sanity. Kit said nothing in reply to the innuendoes thrown out in his hearing, but smiled quietly, and moved into the house, without making any fuss about it. The result justified his conduct; his business and his profits doubled within six months, and quadrupled within the year. He removed his family to a country-house, and came every morning early to town to look after his shop, which promised to maintain its old character, and realise a fortune for them all, with due care in its management, by the time the lease had expired.

But Kit was not destined to wait for that. One morning, as he was sitting in his counting-house scanning the Price-current for the day, he received a visit from one of the corporation solicitors. That gentleman opened his business at once by demanding, in the name of the corporation, what amount Mr Cinnamon would be disposed to accept for the surrender of his lease. One might have supposed that Kit would have been taken aback by such a demand; on the contrary, he received it with remarkable equanimity—merely smiled his customary smile, bowed his customary bow, and replied that he had no intention of parting with his lease on any terms. The lawyer returned to the charge, but with no effect; and finally, after a little jocular skirmishing, withdrew. A day or two after, he came again, and renewed the discussion. Kit was immovable as ever—nothing should induce him to turn out. 'But it must be done,' said the lawyer. 'We are going to pull down the opposite row of houses, rebuild your side in grand style, and run the street half a mile westward.' 'So I hear,' said Kit; 'but I do not give up my lease for all that. I shall not stand in the way of improvement. Pull down, and rebuild in any style you like; but provide me a place to carry on my business the while, and give me the occupancy of the new house when it is finished until my term—which, of course, I shall renew according to the covenants—is expired.' There was no help for it. Kit would admit of no other conclusion; and as the improvements had to be carried out at once, the authorities were obliged to arrange affairs according to his wishes.

So Kit moved out into capital premises in an adjoining street, while the old buildings vanished in a cloud of dust, that hung over the neighbourhood for a twelvemonth, and the new ones rose in lofty magnificence upon their site. When Kit saw his old corner-shop—lately buried in a lane not a dozen feet wide—standing seventy feet high, with a huge semicircular façade, superb in pillars, pilasters, and carved cornices, fronting one of the most imposing approaches to the very centre of the city, he hardly knew what to make of it. The house, he saw, would be roomy enough to domicile a small colony, and thought it would make a stupendous grocer's shop; and he longed, with a natural instinct, to be fitting it out in a style to eclipse the whole trade; yet he began to ponder on the propriety of so doing, taking all circumstances into consideration. It was not long before some aids to reflection came to him in the shape of overtures from a house-agent with whom he had a gossiping acquaintance, who offered him an annuity of £500 a year during the term of his lease, relieving him at the same time of the old rent-charge. Kit was in no hurry. It would be some months yet before the new house was habitable, and he would take time to make up his mind. The house-agent came again, and increased his bid—came a third time, and

doubled it: all to no purpose. Other competitors now stepped in; among the rest, a banking-firm offered at first £1500, then £2000 a year for the house, paying, besides, the old rent. Kit, who had been wide awake all the time, became wider awake than ever. He was determined to give the competitors as much line as they would run out—and they ran out a pretty considerable length. The upshot of it was, after a furious and protracted struggle between various associated bodies and private speculators, that Mr Cinnamon retained the lease of the house in his own hands, letting the several floors to tenants of his own choice: the ground-floor for £1500 a year to an assurance company; the first floor to another public company, for the same sum; and the rest of the house, in smaller holdings, for a variable but considerable sum besides.

Christopher Cinnamon, Esquire, is no longer a grocer. The Fortunate Shop has landed him also on a propitious shore. He has disposed of his business to a man of capital for a swingeing sum, and has retired to the groves of Norwood, where he cultivates his own cabbages for his amusement, and the society of a select circle of genteel people for his edification.

Whether the Fortunate Shop will continue to maintain its character, and indemnify the assurance company who have had the assurance to pay so high a price for its countenance—and that other company who have been equally liberal—is more than we can say. For the sake of consistency, it ought to do so; and for the sake of shareholders and assurers, who are on the look-out for dividends, bonuses, and that sort of thing, we most cordially hope it will.

SECRETS OF THE GEMS.

THAT many things glitter which are not gold, is well known; but do the wearers of jewellery know that the bright and beautiful colours exhibited by most of their much-prized gems are purely artificial? Nature supplies the raw material, and art steps in to embellish it. The brilliant necklace or bracelet, which, with the native hue of the stone, would by no means be considered ornamental, becomes matchless in tint and lustre after passing through the hands of the artificer. Your chemist, always discovering something, and always ready with marvellous transformations, is truly a remarkable personage. He is jealous of his secrets, but not always able to keep them. If he could set a seal on his doings, our readers would not have been entertained with the present article, in which we shall take leave to reveal some of his processes.

Let us begin with the agate—rather a common stone, found almost everywhere, and in numerous varieties, among which are the chalcedony, cornelian, onyx, sardonyx, and heliotrope. They all consist principally of quartz, and are more or less pellucid. In some places, they are surprisingly abundant. One of these places is Oberstein, some thirty or forty miles up the valley of the Nahe, a region not often visited by summer tourists, yet interesting enough to repay him who shall explore its devious by-ways, and paths along the river. At the village just mentioned, and at Idal, four miles distant, formations of coarse red conglomerate are met with interposed with trap and greenstone; and in a soft stratum in these rocks, agates are found in considerable quantities. The workings may indeed be called agate-quarries, for they are carried on in the precipitous side of a hill; and to him who sees them for the first time, there is something remarkable in the species of industry created by the presence of the stones.

The nodules of agate, as they come from their long-undisturbed bed, are generally of an ashen-gray colour. The first operation in the process of transformation is to wash them perfectly clean; then to put them into a

vessel containing a mixture of honey and water, which, being closely covered, is plunged into hot ashes for two or three weeks. The essential thing is to keep the liquid from boiling, but at a high temperature. After a sufficient interval, the stones are taken out, cleansed, passed through a bath of sulphuric acid, and then they undergo a second course of roasting in the hot ashes.

To produce a colour in the stones, it is necessary they should be penetrated by some carbonisable substance. This is effected by the honey, which, under the influence of long-continued heat, finds its way into the interior of the crystal, where its carbonisation, if not complete in the first instance, is finished by the sulphuric acid. Some lapidaries use olive-oil instead of honey. The shade of colour depends on the porosity of the layers of the stone: the most porous become at times perfectly black. Some are coloured in two or three hours, others in as many days, others in a week or two, and some resist all attempts to change their natural hue. Some, when taken out of the pan, are found to be a rich dark-brown or chocolate; others, again, having been penetrated by the colouring matter between the layers, are striped alternately white, gray, and brown, like the onyx and sardonyx. By soaking the stones in a solution of sulphate of iron, and then placing them for a few hours in the oven, a fine cornelian red is produced in the porous layers, while those not porous remain unaltered. Thus it not unfrequently happens that very coarse and common stones—muddy-yellow or cloudy-gray—which in their natural condition would be valueless, are passed off as stones of the first quality. It is only within the last forty years that this process has been known in Germany; but the Italian lapidaries were acquainted with it centuries ago. Hence we can account for the exquisite colour of antique cameos and other ornaments once numerous in the cabinets of Italy, and now to be seen in museums and private collections in all parts of the world. The dealers, when making their purchases of what we may call the raw material, select what appears to be a desirable piece; and chipping off a minute portion, they moisten the exposed surface with the tongue, and watch the absorption of the moisture. If regular and equal, the stone is good for an onyx; if not, it is added to the heap of inferior varieties. This, however, is but a rough-and-ready test, and not always decisive.

The pores of the stones by which the colour is conveyed and retained, are visible with the microscope, and the effect of various tints is produced according as the light falls upon them at different angles. The rainbow-agate is full of minute cells, which, when exposed to the sun, produce prismatic colours, as is observed of the stræ of mother-of-pearl. To detect cavities in the stones, they are soaked in water, which, slowly penetrating, reveals the hollows. Some already contain water when first found; and it is a remarkable fact, that if kept in a dry place, the water disappears, but without leaving the slightest trace of moisture on the surface; and the stones can only be refilled by boiling them.

Balls of striped red chalcodony are much prized: a large one, weighing a hundred pounds, was found in 1844 near Weisselberg, and was sold in the rough for 700 guilders. Some kinds of chalcodony are made to appear of a citron yellow, by a two days' roasting in an oven, and a subsequent immersion in a close hot-bath of spirit of salt for two or three weeks. A blue colour, which has all the effect of a turquoise, is also produced; but the particular colouring process has hitherto been kept a secret. Those stones which are naturally coloured are at times roasted, to heighten the tint, and add to its permanency. The Brazilian cornelian becomes singularly lustrous under the process; the explanation being, that the long-continued action of heat removes the oxyhydrate of iron contained in the stone, leaving it with a clear brightness diffused

through the whole mass. The smallest stones are roasted before polishing; but the large ones, of which saucers, vases, cups, plates, &c., are made, are first cut into the required shape and thinness—otherwise they fly to pieces when exposed to heat. After all the colouring operations have been gone through, the stones are ground on a wheel; soaked in oil for a day, to conceal the fine scratches, and give a good polish; and then cleaned off with bran.

Those who examined the collection of gems and works of art from rare stones in the Great Exhibition of 1851, will remember the elegant onyx vases of different colours—some streaked with white natural veins; the cups of red chalcodony; a chain of the same substance in large square links of different colours, and without visible joints; besides other objects so beautifully finished, that a prize-medal was awarded to the manufacturers.

So far, we have been treating of methods by which art assists nature: we come now to the gems that are not found in the side of a quarry, but formed in the chemist's laboratory. Before the days of Berlin wool and crochet-work, young ladies used to amuse themselves by making crystalline baskets and trays, as ornaments for the mantel-piece, but they had first to dissolve their alum. The chemist works by other means; and especially since the application of electro-galvanism to his processes, there is something really wonderful in the results. He produces crystals at pleasure, and in lumps that would astonish those who once laboured so hard in search of the philosopher's-stone. A few years ago, M. Ebelman laid before the French Academy of Sciences specimens of artificial quartz—some white, others blue, red, and violet; and by mixing chloruret of gold with the silicic acid used in the composition, he produced a mass traversed throughout with delicate veins of gold, similar to the lumps brought from Australia or California. By a modification of his process, he produced hydropic—those species of opal which is transparent only when immersed in water; and specimens also of the allied crystal, hyalite. In this operation, silicic ether and moist air are principally employed; and a variety of colours could be imparted by the admixture of different coloured alcoholic solutions. Chloride of gold produces a beautiful topaz yellow; and by exposing the crystal for a time to light, the gold is dispersed through it in flakes, as in aventurine; and kept in sunlight, the flakes change to a violet or rose colour, and become transparent. In this fact, we have an extraordinary instance of molecular action—the distribution of metallic scales through a solid mass; one which, as some geologists suppose, helps to throw light on the mode of formation of rocks and minerals. That pieces of wood, plants, and animal substances will become silicified, or, as is commonly said, petrified, is well known; and though often wondered at, the diffusion of the gold flakes through the crystal is yet more marvellous.

Besides Ebelman, two other savans—Senarmont and Becquerel—have obtained surprising results in the artificial formation of crystals and minerals. Some among their specimens of chrysolite and chrysoberyl were hard enough to cut glass. And many curious effects have been noted in the course of their investigations and experiments. Glass containing arsenic, though at first transparent, becomes cloudy and opaque, then waxy, and finally crystalline. A familiar instance of a similar effect is offered by barley-sugar, which gradually loses its transparency, and becomes somewhat waxy in texture. Another discovery was, that pounded loaf-sugar, mixed with sulphuric acid, forms a glutinous substance which, when dry, detonates like gun-cotton.

We might go on with these interesting results, which open novel views of the capabilities of chemical science; but for the present we content ourselves with a few

words on ultramarine—a substance much used by artists and by a certain class of artificers. Some years ago, it was prepared exclusively from *lopis lazuli*, a mineral found in Siberia, and was sold at prices varying from seven to twenty guineas the ounce, according to quality. But the chemists set to work upon it, prying, weighing, testing, and eventually discovered its constituents, but were long at a loss for the colouring principle. At last Guimet, of Lyon, hit on the idea of trying to combine the constituents in their natural proportions, as in the native mineral; and the result was, that the colour was produced, and ultramarine could be sold at two guineas a pound. The constituents are—silicate of alumina, soda, and sulphuret of sodium; and the colour is supposed to be due to the action of the last on the two first. Guimet's success set other experimenters on the scent; the secret was rediscovered, and now ultramarine may be bought at 1s. 3d. a pound, and is largely used in many industrial processes.

But there is still another way of manufacturing artificial gems; and to make our article complete, we must finish with a short notice of it. Our clever allies across the Channel have the credit of discovering and practising it with no small advantage to themselves. Just outside the Barrière du Trône at Paris, stands a large factory, where a species of sand, brought from the Forest of Fontainebleau, is converted into emerald, topaz, sapphire, and ruby. Artificial pearls are also produced in great numbers; and as these are lined with fish-scales, an active fishery of roach and dace is kept up in the Seine during the spring months, when the fish are in their prime. But it is for the manufacture of diamonds that the factory is most celebrated—diamonds that deceive the eye of everybody but the maker. Thomas Carlyle has given us, among his *Essays*, a story concerning *The Diamond Necklace*, which lets us into the secret of a stupendous fraud, successfully accomplished before the very eyes of royalty; and if we could get at the history of the transactions of this diamond-factory, we should find the fraudulent business still lively. Many have been deceived who never found out the cheat put upon them; others have discovered it to their sorrow. We give one instance from among many, borrowed from a contemporary:—

‘A few years ago, an English lady entered the shop belonging to the proprietor of the factory, situate on the Boulevard, looking rather flushed and excited, and drawing from her muff a number of morocco-cases of many shapes and sizes, opened them one after another, and spread them on the counter.

“I wish,” she said, “to inquire the price of a *parure*, to be made in exact imitation of this: that is, if you can imitate the workmanship with sufficient precision for the distinction never to be observed.”

M. B—— examined the articles attentively, named his price, and gave the most unequivocal promise that the *parure* should be an exact counterpart of the one before him. The lady insisted again. She was urgent overmuch, as is the case with the fair sex in general. Was he sure the imitation would be perfect? Had he observed the beauty and purity of these stones? Could he imitate the peculiar manner in which they were cut, &c.

“Soyez tranquille, madame,” replied M. B——; “the same workman shall have the job, and you may rely on having an exact counterpart of his former work.”

The lady opened her eyes in astonishment and alarm; and M. B—— added, by way of reassuring her: “I will attend to the order myself, as I did when I received the commands of Milor —, who ordered this very *parure*, I think, last February;” and with the greatest unconcern, he proceeded to search his ledger, to ascertain which of the workmen had made it, and the date of its delivery. Meanwhile, the lady had sunk down in a swoon. The milor named by the tradesman

was no other than her own treacherous lord and master, who had forestalled her, by exchanging Rundell and Bridge's goodly work against M. B——'s deceptive counterfeit, no doubt to liquidate his obligations on the turf. The vexation of the lady on recovering from her fainting-fit may be imagined: she reproached the diamond-maker with having assisted her husband in deceiving her, and retired mortified at the idea that she herself had never detected the difference between the false and the real. Many times had she worn the glittering gems, believing them to be the same she had brought in her casket from England.

We have heard it said, that many of the snuff-boxes given away as marks of royal or imperial favour are adorned with diamonds made in M. B——'s factory; and that Mehemet Ali, the late Pacha of Egypt, was the first to give away the costly-looking shams. If this be true, it would only be fair to expose the mighty personages, as well as cheating grocers. Let the recipients of snuff-boxes and diamond-rings see to it. A mock tiara, that may be bought for 600 francs, will look as well as a real one worth L.1000. What, then, shall be said of minor articles?

LIFE'S UNDERCURRENT.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

MANY years have come and gone since I first formed the resolution to narrate the events of my obscure life; but I have been prevented by my doubts and fears. Would the world care to know anything about Charles Graham, his privations or sorrows; one who never left his native country, and never mixed in events of startling interest; whose days and years were passed in the undercurrent of society, unheeded and unknown?

The first four years of my life are dimly impressed upon my memory; I had then a home and parents. My father's image is but faint; not so my mother's. Even now, in my dreams, I see her, and sit upon her knee; she playing with my yellow locks, that are now gray and scant. There is one scene in my father's house no time can ever efface: my mother in her shroud, my father weeping over her, and, by and by, a number of strangers carrying her away. I wept because my father wept: I knew not the sad loss I had sustained. In a few weeks after, he followed her to the grave himself, and I was left alone in the wide world.

Relations I had none, that any of the neighbours had ever heard my parents speak of: they were from a distant part of the country, and poor. He was but a labouring-man, who had no trade; his abode was in a garret of an old decayed house, where poverty finds a shelter while any feeling of independence remains, and all privations are endured to shun the workhouse. Among the neighbours that inhabited the same flat of garrets, there was one called Annie, a poor old woman, who had been most kind and attentive to my parents in their illness, and was most kind to me. When the others proposed to throw me upon the parish, the good Annie would not hear of it, but said: ‘I will look to poor Charlie while I live; and at my death, it will be time enough then.’ The others took no interest in the disposal of me, so long as I was not to be a burden upon them; and Annie got her own way. With her I lived for six years: I shared her bed, and often scanty meal; but she always gave me the larger share. She loved me as her own child; and I loved and obeyed her as if she had been my mother, and still revere her memory.

Poor Annie's was a common lot. Born of poor but

respectable parents, she had been sent in early life from her father's home to service, in which she continued, with a fair character, for many years. With strict economy, she had saved out of her wages a good sum of money for her station, and become a prize worth winning to young men in her sphere of life.

In an evil hour for her, she was won, and became the wife of one who proved unworthy of her. Short was her dream of happiness. Her husband, who had no money of his own, got all she had to commence business for himself: like many others, he could be a servant, but not a master. With money in his power he had not toiled for, he became improvident and dissipated; in a few years, all was gone. Peace and comfort had long before fled poor Annie's fireside; now care and want had become its constant inmates: still, Annie struggled on to stem the flood of poverty. At length dissipation did its work: her husband died, and left her destitute. After his death, she maintained herself by labour, until old age rendered her unable to perform a whole day's work, and reduced her to her present low estate.

How strong is woman's love! Young as I was, I remember how her eye brightened when she spoke of her husband—her favourite theme—of his good looks; then all his evil doings were forgotten and buried with him: his good alone survived. Then would she weep, and say: 'Save a few faults, he was the best of men.' I never heard her murmur at her lot. She often said to me: 'Charlie, put your trust in God, and He will never forsake you. I am now old, and He has supported me through many trials, for my trust was in Him. I am now far happier, a poor gatherer (chiffonniere), than I was before; for when I was adding to my wealth, I was full of care; and when my husband was squandering it, I had both care and sorrow. Now I can lift my heart in humble dependence on One who is stronger than I: no care for the morrow disturbs my mind. I can say in sincerity of heart: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."'

I was too young for many months to accompany her through the streets and lanes of the city at the first peep of dawn: I remained in bed until her return. Very soon, however, she taught me to be useful to her. I kindled the fire before her return, and ran messages for the neighbours, and throve apace, and became sharp and active for my years. At length, I sallied forth with Annie, my little basket on my arm, to wander with her in the gray of a summer morning; searching among the ashes and rubbish for anything we could turn to account, trifles that had been thrown into the streets by people a few grades better off in their circumstances than poor Annie. Again we wandered forth in the evening on our weary rounds. During the intervals between our wanderings, Annie plied her wheel and spun, and I sat by our little window, and learned my alphabet; for she had got some teaching in her youth, could read her Bible, and scrawl a few lines—not very easy to decipher. Such was my teacher, and I made progress.

For weeks and months, I sat at her side, and was patiently taught by her, until I could read my Catechism, and answer every question it contained. Her well-thumbed Bible next she made me read aloud to her. The first feeling of pride I ever felt was when she said: 'Charlie, you read the blessed Book better than I can.' I had toil and privation; yet I look back on these as happy days.

Our quiet hearth was often disturbed by the brawls of our neighbours; for dire necessity compelled Annie to live among the offscourings of society, where intemperance and profanity prevailed; still, the most abandoned of our neighbours respected Annie. Such is the homage vice pays to virtue. Even in this retreat of

abject poverty, there were different grades of character, and some free from any stain save poverty. Of such was one we used to call the Mourning Lady.

In the next room to Annie lived this mysterious female. No one knew her name: the neighbours in the garret called her the Mourning Lady, for she was always in deep mourning; but not that of a widow. From her manners and dress, she could not, in former years, have been the child of poverty. She was not an old woman. Her face was finely formed, but very pale, and she looked sad, and spoke habitually low in her pleasant English accent. Compared with the others, her voice was music to my young ear. She held intercourse with none save Annie, and Annie loved and respected her. Neither of us was ever in her room—the lady seldom left it, and then only after night-fall. Once or twice, she was absent from her room for a few days, and was always sadder when she came back. She appeared to us to have no mode of living; for she neither spun nor sewed, yet never wanted food, as others often did. It was only on the Sabbath evening that she came to Annie's room, when we went to church together—I under Annie's cloak, to hide my rags. On our return, she never spoke of anything but religious subjects. After a short stay, she would retire to her own room until the following Sabbath.

One afternoon, a short time before Annie and I set out on our rounds, the lady came into our room, and asked me to carry a letter to a hotel in town, and wait an answer. Away I ran. It was with difficulty I could get the proud waiters to take the letter from me, and deliver it; but at length they did. I waited only a short while on the steps outside the door—I was too ragged to stand in the lobby. When a letter was given to me, I ran home with it. The Mourning Lady was still with Annie: she opened it. As she read, I saw the tears run down her pale face. She spoke not one word, but 'Thank you, Charlie,' and retired into her room.

Next forenoon, after our return from the morning's gathering, she took Annie into her room: I was by her side. The lady was more composed. A small bundle in a black silk handkerchief lay on a little table. 'Annie,' said she, 'I am now going to leave you. I would reward your kindness, but I have not the power. Whatever is in this room, I leave to you: it is not much. Farewell, good Annie; we shall never meet again until we meet in Heaven.' Her voice faltered: both were in tears. I got the little bundle on my head: 'God comfort you, poor lady,' said Annie as we went out. When we came within a few doors of the hotel, the lady took the bundle from me, and gave me a piece of silver. There was a post-chaise at the door: a gentleman handed her in, and it drove away. I returned to Annie, and shewed her my riches, elate with joy; but Annie was weeping.

That day, we removed what was of use to Annie, and she disposed of the other articles. There was not much; but it was a treasure to poor Annie, and enabled her to procure several little comforts, and me a cheap second-hand dress.

Of a very different character was Miss Jane, who exhibited, in the room on our left, a melancholy specimen of human frailty: her life was a series of broken resolutions, sin, and repentance. Her relations were wealthy and respectable, but she had worn out their endurance by her evil habits, and she was disowned by them: the lust for ardent spirits was her bane. She was not always, however, under the influence of this passion; but would for weeks be sober and industrious. She was expert at needlework of the highest quality, and could maintain herself genteelly and comfortably.

In her lucid intervals, she was all penitence and self-upbraiding; she was even religious, and attended church regularly. At these times, Annie would say: 'I trust

Miss Jane is at last a reformed woman.' Vain hope! Perhaps next morning, as we went out, we would find her asleep at her door, in a helpless state of intoxication. Then she would continue a new course of drinking until all her former earnings were gone, and any clothes she could spare in pawn, to be redeemed again by toil and in penitence. Such was this victim of a low passion—still young and handsome, when dressed and in her sober periods. Annie often remonstrated and exhorted with her. She would say: 'Poor lost woman! Lost in this world and the world to come; for the Scriptures say again and again: "No drunkard shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven."' "

Miss Jane would tartly reply: 'Annie, I am not a drunkard—I only take a ramble at a time; but for weeks, I never taste or care for it; not like some of our neighbours, who are never sober when they can get drink. I scorn the name of drunkard!' Such was Miss Jane.

After the Mourning Lady left us, the room soon got a new tenant. Like her, he had not the appearance of the usual occupiers of these wretched dens, for rooms they could scarcely be called—they were low and campeiled, the windows small, and looking only on the sky, or the roofs of the opposite buildings. The new tenant's appearance was gentle and subdued; but there was a fire in his eye at times, as it glanced from under his high pale brow. His clothing was genteel, but bare, aged, and well-kept. I soon learned that he was an unsuccessful artist, who had come to the city, unknown to fame, to court her favours in a new sphere of action. When not reading to Annie, I spent my time in his room, gazing in wonder on the creations of his pencil—the beautiful forms that, to my young mind, he made to rise out of nothing, and remain permanent on the panel. I saw them assume their forms, but I could not comprehend how; I thought it was something more than human.

Beautiful as they were, he could not live upon them, scarcely by them. I was his agent in the sale of his pictures, and carried them to the pawn or the dealers, asking a small sum, but oftener taking what I could get for them. He had no choice, however: one I was told to ask five shillings for, brought me an offer of only two shillings and sixpence; this was among his first. I carried it back to him, and told what I had been offered. I knew he had not got his breakfast, and had nothing in the house. With a desponding look, he said: 'Charlie, I have no choice: go, take the money; but it is far too small a sum for such a picture.'

Away I ran back to the dealer; but he would now only give me two shillings, and I took them. The artist sighed when I gave him the pittance, and sent me for bread and cheese with the half of it.

Thus he struggled on, taking for his works what I could get. At times, I was told to come back with another. The artist never went himself: he was far too bashful—a feeling I knew nothing about at this time. For several months, he had struggled on, and was getting lower and lower in spirits. His pictures did not, by the prices I got from the dealers, appear to rise in the public opinion, and want was pressing hard upon him. 'Charlie,' said he to me, 'I will make one effort more. I have a favourite sketch I have kept for happier times: I will try it at my utmost need. If it fails, I will forsake my art for ever, for I cannot live by it, and I must have mistaken my talent.'

The picture was taken to a dealer: he gave me five shillings for it, and bade me call again in a day or two with another. I returned to the artist rejoicing, and told what the dealer had said; but I never saw him so much depressed. He wrought none for the next two days. At length hunger pressed: I got one that he had by him, and ran to the dealer. 'I do not care for this,' he said; 'bring me a companion to the last, and I will give you the same sum for it.'

I begged him to take the one I brought, and he gave me two shillings for it. I ran to the artist with the money, and told him the order I had got, thinking he would rejoice; for five shillings seemed to me a large sum.

I expected to see him pleased—not so: he groaned, and buried his face in his hands. 'Is it come to this?' said he. 'How can I have mistaken my vocation so much?' At length he raised his head—his eyes were damp: 'My poverty, and not my will, consents.' The picture was finished, true to the time, and I was despatched with it. It was on a small panel, for the artist was too poor to paint a large one, or time from his wants to spare: he painted for bare life.

When I reached the shop, almost breathless with the haste I made, there was a gentleman in conversation with the dealer. I have said I was not bashful; so I went boldly up to the counter, nor heeded the gestures the dealer made me to keep back and leave the shop. I was too anxious to get the money, and carry it to the artist; and placing it upon the counter before him, said: 'You promised me five shillings; it is the same size as the other one.' He would have covered the picture, but it was not yet dry. I pertinaciously stood by the counter, and insisted upon having the money. The gentleman looked at the picture, then at the dealer.

'Why,' said he, 'this is the companion to the one I bought from you the other day, for which you charged me two guineas. What is the price, boy?'

'Five shillings, sir,' was my answer. He looked at the dealer, who was looking at me as if he could have killed me on the spot.

'For shame!' said he to the dealer. 'I will deal with the artist himself. Here, poor boy, are the two guineas I was to have paid for it, and a shilling to yourself. Give this card to the artist, and tell him to call on me.' I ran out of the shop, and reached home breathless from joy and the speed with which I had run up the long turnpike-stair to our garret. I ran first to Annie to give her my shilling—a great sum to her, for she was now in bad health, and very frail, and unable to wander far at night or morning. The anxious artist heard my joyous voice as I told her my good-fortune: he came in hastily, and I gave him the two pound-notes and the two shillings, with the card, and told him what the gentleman had said.

He leaped for joy, then sank into a chair, and remained silent for some time, gazing on the card. The money he seemed not to care for—it remained in his hand unlooked at: he seemed to me as if he cared not about the money—the small bit of card engrossed his whole thought. When he rose to go into his own room—'Charlie,' said he, 'here are the odd shillings for you: I am still your debtor.' This was a white day for us all.

That same day, the artist's garb was improved, and he came home with a larger canvas than I had ever seen him use before. He was in great spirits; and he set to work, and whistled or sung from daylight until twilight: the canvas glowed under his brush as I stood by his side gazing in admiration. At length the picture was finished, and taken home. On his return, joy and hope shone in his countenance: he was most liberal to me. He painted only two or three more pictures in the garret, which he left for a more respectable lodging. He was at length known to fame, and no longer at the mercy of the dealers, who would now have offered pounds for the shillings they had given me.

It will seem surprising that in a community like ours there was a miser! There was, indeed, a revolting character, a neighbour in the garret, the poorest of the poor inmates, for he was haunted by the demon of poverty, in the spirit of greed. He was always whining and complaining, yet the inmates affirmed that he had money, and could live better than he did. He was not

an aged man, yet lean and haggard in his appearance, as if bowed down by years. He was always begging from the other inmates: he denied himself even necessary food. He had a box of hardware, spectacles, and other goods; but, if we could believe him, he never made any sales: he begged from his neighbours a share of their scanty meals, and sat by their firesides until he was unwelcome. But he cared not for their hints to retire—even insult fell unheeded on his ears, so long as he enjoyed the comforts of a fire, a thing he never had in his own room.

Yet this miserable man had once lived in affluence, and was liberal and humane, until, by some mishap—I never knew of what nature—was sunk to beggary, when his whole nature changed. He had one daughter, who had been for a time the companion of his misfortunes. In his most abject want, she had been married to an industrious tradesman, depending only on his labour, and having little to bestow upon her father. Several times she came to visit him, and bring a few comforts, such as she could spare from her poor home—her father accepting everything, yet grumbling. He was always in want—the pest of the whole garret. I will not dwell much longer on him.

At length, after four days of continued absence, Annie and the neighbours became anxious to know what had become of this miserable being, for no one had heard him go out. I was sent to his daughter, and brought her with me. When the door was forced, I shall never forget the sight that presented itself. Upon the almost bare floor lay the emaciated body of the old man, his arm stretched towards a few crusts that lay before him, but not within his reach. All was misery within the room, and his time-worn clothes were on his person; but he was cold in death. He had evidently been taken ill, and, unable to help himself or call for aid, had died from want.

When his daughter and Annie were stripping the body to dress the corpse, they were astonished at the weight of the vest and small-clothes; and on examining them, and opening up the quilting, for it was all lined and sewed over with rags, they found guineas, half-guineas, and crowns—I never heard how many—all concealed in the clothes. I only saw the heap upon the table. The old miser was buried, and the daughter's husband became a prosperous tradesman in the city.

How different was rough Tom, as we called him—open and free, beloved by all the inmates, full of frolic and humour, yet often very annoying to Annie when in his cups; although he had a great regard for her, and I was his favourite. He had spent his youth in the army; for twenty-seven years he had served his king and country in many lands.

It was my greatest pleasure to sit and listen to his marvellous tales, as he told me of his campaigns in America. He had been in the battle of Bunker's Hill, and was with Burgoyne when he surrendered. How my young blood curdled as he told of the fierce Red 'Engins'—their massacres and their scalplings—of peaceful homes consumed, and blackened bodies. I trembled as I listened; yet there was a fascination that held me fast, or I would have fled. When I left his room, his stories flitted before my imagination like a phantasmagoria: Red Indians and scalplings haunted me in all their horrors; yet I loved to hear Thomas tell of them.

Of all the inmates of the garret, Tom was the most scrupulously clean. When he went out, his shoes, whether good or bad, were shining-black, and every article he wore was well brushed. He might with economy have starved comfortably enough through life, for he had a pension of ninepence a day for his service and wounds; but economy and Tom had never been acquainted, and when he drew his pension, which he did twice a year, it was a saturnalia in our garret

until all was spent, for everybody must partake of his hospitality, and Tom was in his glory as the head and promoter of the feasting and revelry.

When all was spent, then came want and suffering again. Tom would go out and ply as a porter on the streets for any light work he could get to do, for he was far from strong: age and hard service had shaken almost to a ruin a naturally iron frame. He was often as much pinched as any of us, but, like an old soldier, suffered without complaint: all he looked forward to in this world was next pay-day, as he called it. He took the world as it came, or, rather, as he made it.

The other occupants of this garret-floor had never been but what they were, pure birds of prey—venders of matches and other small-wares, and never had a higher ambition; enjoying heartily any little good-fortune that fell to them in the course of the day's excursions. Annie and I were made partakers—for we of the garret were a commonwealth—often of misery, and sometimes of gleams of happiness between.

To-morrow was a day we never thought of providing for. Want was ever at our side; and the present employed all our energies.

The period of my abode with Annie was now drawing to a close. For six years she had cherished me as a son: she did all in her power to keep me free from vice; but I was too young to understand her admonitions. My memory was well stored with psalms, questions, and texts of Scripture, but I saw little around me save scenes of profanity and dissipation. Except in Annie, I saw no shade of self-restraint. I loved the soldier, notwithstanding, even in his cups; and Miss Jane in her sober moods; and likewise the Mourning Lady while she was with us, for Annie loved her. With all the others, I was on good terms: I saw neither good nor evil in their ways, save in their drunkenness when they annoyed me. I was the pet of all. Young as I was, I was their messenger; wily and sharp, and active as a kid; learned above my years, for I could write a goodish hand. For this, I was indebted to Miss Jane, who taught me in order that I might write begging-letters to her friends; and often I brought her answers with money in them, if I might judge by their weight.

Poor Annie, worn out with age and toil, was now unable to go her wonted rounds. My scanty gatherings were unable to support us; but the other inmates spared something from their scanty means, and Miss Jane nursed her as a daughter, and never got tipsy during her illness. Annie was calm and resigned, and even wished for death; her only regret was to leave me destitute. At length, the hour came. I was sitting by her side on the miserable bed, weeping; a few of the female inmates were in the room, for even to the vicious a death-bed is a solemn scene. Annie had lain for some time as if life had fled: no one spoke to disturb the passing spirit; a dead silence was in the room. She revived, as if by an effort; and placing her cold hand on my head, attempted to speak, but so indistinctly, I could not understand her. I thought I could distinguish the words: 'Trust in God:' her hand fell from my head; she gave a deep sigh—it was her last.

By whom, or where, she was buried, I never knew. Four men came with a plain blackened coffin, and carried her to her silent grave: no mourner followed. Miss Jane got a bottle of whisky, and gave the neighbours a dram, and then commenced one of her drinking rambles.

I was once again without a friend on earth. The little furniture she had was taken by the landlord for arrears of rent. For several nights, I slept alone in the empty room, almost dead with fear; for I had heard from Annie and the others fearful stories of ghosts and other unearthly things, which those who told of them firmly believed in. Darkness and solitude chilled my young heart more than the cold I suffered;

but dire necessity overcame my terrors. I went no more forth to gather. I got a morsel from the inmates for running their messages, and Miss Jane was very kind, for I was useful to her.

TRACINGS OF ICELAND AND THE FARÖE ISLANDS.

RIDE TO THE GEYSERS: FIRST DAY.

A RIDE to the Geysers! Not one reader in a thousand can have the faintest idea of what it means and implies. Be it known that the particular group of hot springs known as the Geysers, is fully seventy English miles from Reikiavik. The journey can be performed on horseback in two days, and the same time is required for returning—the intermediate stopping-place being Thingvalla, thirty miles from Reikiavik. There are no roads in Iceland, nothing but rough tracks; there are no inns, nor any accommodation that can be depended upon in private houses. With ponies to carry yourself, your provisions, tent, and bedding, you adventure into what is virtually a wilderness, like the member of an exploratory-party in Caffreland or Australia. You bid adieu for the time to civilisation, to all its refinements and comforts, trusting, in the sight of extraordinary natural objects, to find a compensation for all the hardships you are to encounter. If the weather be of a broken character, as it was now, and is apt to be before the middle of July, then the discomforts of the adventure are likely to be not a little enhanced.

I had difficulties of my own to think of. Having been a rider hitherto on only a few rare occasions, and having reached a time of life when the body has lost much of the elasticity on which successful riding depends—remembering how racked and battered I had been by a Highland pony last year in Glen Tilt, I hardly knew how I was to get through this long rough ride. The only thing *per contra* was a hardy resolve to do my best, and not give in for light cause. All the day before our start, I looked anxiously at each group of ponies we met on the street, and they were not a few, for this was the time when the country-people come to dispose of their wool to the Reikiavik merchants, and take back supplies of fish and other provisions in exchange. I examined with care the saddles and other furnishings, and studiously considered whether I should be able to keep on the back of any such creature for a single mile; how much would be the momentum of a mass resembling my body thrown from its back upon the ground; what, supposing I kept on, would be the extent of strain and shatterment I should endure in thirty or forty miles: the whole physics of the business was clearly brought before me in the first place, and the whole pathology in the second. I must own I felt a little nervous. There is a peculiar saddle used by women in Iceland, composed of a kind of low arm-chair, placed sideways on the horse, allowing the feet to hang together on one side, where they are supported on a rest formed of wood. I cast many a longing lingering look at such examples of this kind of saddle as met my observation; wondering whether I could face the shame of adopting such an effeminate expedient; cogitating whether there were any good reason why an inelastic middle-aged traveller should not please himself in the matter of a saddle; turning the thing in all sorts of ways. It was all to no purpose—more moral courage was required to do the one thing, than physical to brave the other. So I gave up

all idea of heteroclitic modes of riding, determined to do as the rest did, and—'bitterly thought of the morrow.'

The morrow came, a dull gray cool morning, threatening to renew the rain of the preceding day. I was spared so much of the trouble of pre-arrangements, that I can give but a superficial account of them. Coming ashore between seven and eight, I found the rough puddly street fronting the sea filled with a crowd of horses and men, much like a country fair in Scotland. As our party consisted of twelve gentlemen, besides the captain's steward, and three guides, for all of whom both riding and relief horses were required, and as seven horses were further required for the baggage and provisions alone, we had rather more than forty of these animals assembled for our service. The loading of the baggage was the business of chief difficulty. An Icelandic baggage-horse has first a thick sod laid over its back; over that is girded on a packsaddle of wood, bristling with pins; on the pins are hung either certain boxes, for carrying small articles, or the bundles, bags, and other things which are too large to be accommodated in the boxes. To tie the latter articles on with coarse woollen ropes, in such equipage as may prevent the double burden from being overset—here is the labour and the cumber before starting on an excursion in Iceland. It seemed as if there were to be no end of tying and untying, strapping on and taking off, trying this way and that way: hard work for the guides and ourselves; while round about us stood groups of fishermen and other populace, staring at the work with lacklustre eyes and open mouths, as if unable to muster so much intelligence as might enable them to understand what we were about. We had all provided ourselves with Mackintosh cloaks; and some who were duly forewarned about the journey, were cased in proof to the heel. So was not I, which has only the more impressed on me the duty of recommending every future traveller in Iceland to have some sort of overalls, fishing-boots, or what not, to defend himself, not merely from the only too likely rain, but from the still more likely plash of the horse-tracks, and the flowing rivers he will have to cross. An old hat will be the best covering for his head, as, in the event of his being thrown off, it may save his face and head from injury.

Well, at length the strappings, unstrappings, and restrappings come to an end, and we all mount and ride off, forty-one or forty-two horses in all! If right rule had been followed, the guides would have been on before with the reserve and baggage-horses, so that that rough tumultuary body would have been out of our way. As it was, we went all confusedly in one line—highly picturesque in general effect, but not very convenient to us. Presently, the gentlemen-travellers got themselves separate and ahead, and then things became more agreeable. For two or three miles, the track is cleared of stones, and not very bad to ride upon. It allowed us to launch out rather briskly. To my agreeable surprise, I kept my seat pretty well, and even found that a hard trot was not attended with either imminent danger or actual suffering. The atmosphere cleared, too; and what with the lively rattling movement, and the social feeling excited by the numbers of our cavalcade, I felt an exhilaration for which I had been totally unprepared. The immediate scenery was, it is true, a rocky desert; but we

had the sea and the grand Essian mountains not far off. Everything that met the sight was new and strange, and we had unimaginable wonders before us. Bickering along the hard black path went we, winding and threading along, sometimes one ahead, sometimes another; sometimes straggling in a long broken series, sometimes close up, no two persons alike in costume, scarcely any two co-ordinate in the gift of horsemanship, but all alike apparently in the enjoyment of the highest spirits, and a resolution to go through with the adventure manfully, whatever might come of it.

Pausing for half an hour at the Lax-elv, four miles from Reikiavik, I had an opportunity of observing a double set of those alluvial terraces which indicate a former different relative level of sea and land; the higher might be a hundred feet above the sea, the lower about thirty. They were composed of a black dust, the detritus of the volcanic rocks of the valley. It was interesting to find, even in the remote Iceland, a monument of certain peculiar past changes of the earth's surface, which at home we are apt to think local and limited. In this case, the land had at one time been submerged to the depth of the upper terrace, and the valley was an estuary. The river having brought in and laid down a bed of alluvial matter, an uprise at length takes place, leaving that in the open air. The river flows over it, cuts it down, leaving terraces at the sides, and then a new alluvial sheet is spread out in the recessed estuary. Another uprise taking place, so as to throw back the sea to where it now is, the second set of terraces is formed in the same way.

The guides having come up, and gone on a little before with the remainder of our train, we mounted again, and proceeded across a country somewhat higher, and where the track ceased to be in any degree indebted to the care of man. Swelling eminences, once glacially smoothed, now shattered and worn by storms, and covered with perched blocks—shelving smooth surfaces in our path, on which we could still easily trace the scratches and furrows made by the ancient ice—had their share of attention. At rare intervals, a distant slope was observed to be a carefully managed grass-farm. In some places rough with blocks, in others full of deep puddles, as the track may be, our hardy little horses go briskly on, picking their steps wonderfully through the one sort of impediments, plashing like wild-ducks through the other, hesitating at nothing apparently but clay, as feeling in it a fatigue which nothing else can give. The Icelandic horse well merits the praise he usually receives. He is not exactly the steed one would like to appear on in the ring at Hyde Park; but for his place and purpose, no creature could be more fit. He is generally of light-brown colour, and not above thirteen hands high. Being essential to all travelling and carrying, an immense number exist in the island. A good one costs about two pounds sterling. It will scarcely be believed, but I was assured, on excellent authority, that the keep of one of these hardy and useful creatures for a winter does not, in most circumstances, stand his owner above a six-dollar (2s. 3d.).

One of our party was Carl Trampe, a son of the governor, a handsome rosy boy of thirteen, who, at our pressing solicitation, had been permitted by his parents to accompany us, partly for the pleasure we had in gratifying a boy, and partly that he might interpret for us to the peasantry and guides; for Danish has now so far departed from the early form of the language (which the Icelandic represents), that our officers could not be understood by the natives. Carl was mounted on a pony of superior condition, the property of his father; and, light and elastic, continually rushing backwards and forwards, around and about us all—now awaying this way, now that—he and his dancing cap-tassel formed quite a feature of our cavalcade. He had

acquired a native trick of managing the horse by his limbs, with little help from a bridle; and the sight of his light figure all alive on the almost flying jennet, capering through amongst piles of blocks, up or down the roughest, boggiest braes, now outlined on the sky a quarter of a mile ahead, then, before I was aware, curvetting at my side, was an envy to myself, and probably one or two others of the senior portion of our train, to whom the simplest progression in such circumstances was all they dared aspire to. Carl's movements, doublings and circlings, were precisely like those of a young dog on a walk with its master, and from the same cause, I presume—the pulses of an overabundant vitality. Dear, happy boy, never can I forget your merry holiday face and kind look, as you every now and then came back to inquire if I had 'een gut hesta' [a good horse], and next moment careered away again to the front, as if borne by the wind! How the pony contrived to pick its steps in such encumbered ground while going at such speed, I can no more tell than I can say how it is that my fingers modulate a strathspey on the flute.

It was a wonderfully rough, novel, hilarious, exciting affair after all. When mixed, as we often were, with the reserve and packhorses—all of which constituted a mere drove or flock, driven on by the three guides and the volunteer aid of Carl—what knocking about, what scattering and gathering-up again! I soon found I should be knocked entirely to pieces by the graze and jam of the boxes and scrippage, as the tide of carrier-ponies crushed past me, if I did not look sharply out and warn them off with my whip. As it was, I got some severe scratches and bruises. About noon, we reached a green valley with a silver stream gliding over the pebbles, and, halting there, let the horses refresh themselves while we partook of a light lunch. The sun was now struggling amidst a dissolving mass of clouds, and the landscape, though it presented not a single human habitation, looked almost gay. By and by, we dashed into a new and drearier wilderness, an elevated moor, skirted by bare rocky hills, where we did not for miles see a patch of pastoral green, or a sheep, cow, or any other of the animals of civilisation. The wildest spot in Assynt or Applecross was a paradise to it. Still, we were all as blithe as larks; and I could hear the wit of the party expressing his satisfaction with everything to a classic-loving friend—

*Pony me pigris ubi nulla campis
Arbor æstiva recreatur aura, &c.—*

as he dashed past him on his miniature Bucephalus. We were indeed too sportive, I fear, and thus had become a little heedless; and so perhaps it was not a wonder that one of our Britons got a tumble, which left him for a few minutes insensible, and inflicted several painful cuts upon his face. We plastered him up admirably, and he made light of the disaster, as a rough rider should. My wonder was that, if there was to be any tumble amongst us, the victim should be any one but myself, to whom it was, all through the journey, a never-failing wonder when I found I could mount, or keep my balance, or guide the reins, or do anything whatever in the way of equitation—not the least wonder of all being when I was able to dismount without taking my measure amongst the stones. The accident sobered us all a little, except, of course, the irrepressible Carl. In time, however, the bepatched countenance of our associate became rather a subject of peasantry amongst us; and when he himself began to cut jokes upon his cuts, as the aforesaid wag remarked, everybody felt that things were again all right.

For fully fifteen miles of our journey to-day, our path was across this dismal high moor, where to the most of our party there was positively nothing to be enjoyed

but our own innate hilarity—neither beautiful scenery, nor sublime scenery, nor good honest serviceable scenery, nor any of the works of human industry or ingenuity. It was literally one unvaried scene of iron country, or, to speak by book, an expanse of hard bare rock, of tame outline, half covered with loose blocks, amongst which we had to thread our way, with nothing to guide us but the champ of preceding travellers. At some places, where a streamlet had to be crossed, a number of blocks had been thrown in across it—a great effort in road-making for the Icelanders, who innocently call it a *bro* [that is, bridge]. At other places, the rocky bed of the streamlet became itself the path for a little way; and there a difficulty generally occurred, for the track onward would be, as it were, dispersed, broken up over a wide waste, from which it would not gather again for a mile or two, and this it would be hard to hit without a guide. At some undrained parts, the depth and extent of puddle was astounding; and through it we had to scamper in a cloud of spatterment, that left us anointed from head to heel. Verily, it is not alone for what comes from above that the services of Mackintosh are called for in Iceland!

While most of my companions groaned at the unrelieved dreariness of this moor, I found my slight acquaintance with geology of service in enabling me to find some interest in the study of its superficial features. The whole surface bore the marks of ancient glacial action—indeed, had been bared and rounded into the form of a rocky moor expressly by the abrading action of moving ice, the blocks being the masses which that agent had detached, and carried along, and finally left on the swept surface. The original glassy smoothness, the furrowing and striation, were visible in many places, the latter having a direction approaching more or less to that of the meridian. I regret that, owing to the impetuosity of my steed, and my unhappy inactivity in dismounting, I could not apply the compass with greater precision. The fact is a curious, and, as far as I am aware, a novel one in the geology of Iceland, and may serve to explain why blocks of granite are reported to have been found on the most elevated spots in the island—a rock nowhere found *in situ* within its bounds. Indeed, it harmonises perfectly with the observations which have now been made in the north of Europe and America, latterly by myself in Scotland, to the effect that there has been a universal sweeping of the surface by ice, down to some point in latitude which remains to be determined. The parallel channels between the Faröe Islands, all lying between north-west and south-east, I regard as excavations made by this wide-spreading arctic ice-sheet.

The first relief from the tedium of the moor which my companions experienced, was when the Lake of Thingvall came in view, giving notice of the approaching termination of our day's ride. It is a fine sheet of water, fully ten miles each way, varied by a few picturesque islets of volcanic aspect, and bounded on the opposite side by lofty mountains. For the last few miles of our journey, we passed over a plain skirting this lake, and somewhat more than a hundred feet above it, having a wall of mountains near by on the left. Not at this time, but afterwards in returning, I observed that the rocky ground was every here and there rent in short deep chasms, all of them pointing towards the lake. At length, approaching Thingvall, which consists merely of a church, a parsonage, and a farm-establishment, we found our way suddenly interrupted by a tremendous chasm, of fully a hundred feet deep, and as much in width, having a flat bottom composed of debris, and covered with green-sward. This is the Allmannagja, or All Men's Chasm, so noted in the narratives of all travellers in Iceland. A rent in the original fabric of the ground is a rare object in nature, at least in our country, though the contrary is

commonly supposed to be the case: I know of but one certain example in Scotland, the famous *Wangie* in the Dumbartonshire hills. Here is a splendid example of the phenomenon, extending for miles, with a river pouring into it on one side, and escaping through a chink on the other. We have to make a kind of cascade of ourselves also, in order to get across it. I had heard of the thrilling terrors of the path, and that, nevertheless, it was common to descend on horseback; so, while some superior equestrians dismounted and led their beasts, I sat still, while my steed went laterally down the face of the hundred-feet vertical precipice, feeling its way from crag to crag, and sometimes slipping upon its hams, till it got to the green-sward below—a bit of adventure such as I had never seen even in Norway. It was a fine piece of savage scenery, such as *Salvator Rosa* would have chosen for a haunt of robbers. The cliffs rose quite vertical on the side we had descended. The other side was lower, and somewhat inclined, having fallen away from the former, as was more particularly shewn by the outer surface in that direction, which descended in steep inclination to the river. It was easy to trace the angularities of the cliffs corresponding to each other on the opposite sides; but to me it was more curious to mark that the general surface thus widely rent clearly bore the usual appearances of glaciation; hence it was evident that the rending had taken place *since* the glacial period. I shall have occasion to return to this subject; meanwhile, we have to cross the river, in order to get to the resting-place beside the church, where the greater number of our men and horses are already assembled. And, truth to tell, this was the worst part of the day's journey to me, as, contrary to my expectation, the river was deep enough to wet me to the knees, and I had, from some strange oversight, no change of shoes.

Behold us, then, gathering up and dismounting at the little cottage-like church of Thingvall, about eight o'clock of a dull, damp, raw evening, with the knowledge that our best lodging was to be a pew or a chancel-floor, without a fire to dry or cook anything; nothing but wet long grass round about us; and even a pair of dry stockings only to be obtained by half-an-hour's pothering among the creased and bespattered baggage, which the guides were now painfully disengaging in the puddle close from the reeking ponies! The patched gentleman took a wicked pleasure afterwards in telling me how rueful I looked at the first accost of Thingvall.

PHILOSOPHY OF SEBASTOPOL.

EXISTENCE is everything to the creature to whom the possession belongs. I have heard that there are wise men who say the external world is altogether a fancy, and that it is the internal sense which entertains the imagination: that alone is a fact. I do not know much about such sort of things, but I must say, if this be true, that I have lately seen fancy dealing with fact in a very rough way in Crim-Tatary, where I have been studying metaphysics. When fanciful balls are driven from the mouth of the cannon by gunpowder, metaphysical facts fall down in a strange way before them. I am just home invalided. Dysentery has done for me more than the bullet and the sword; and I have returned to my native shore a broken and a shattered man. I have, however, seen strange things, and have earned something for myself beyond half-pay—namely, the right to talk about what everybody is glad to listen to.

One of the most surprising pieces of experience I have picked up whilst living amidst scenes of conflict and violence, is the extraordinary indifference with

which men soon come to regard personal risk when danger is continually around them. It seems to me, however, that there is some spice of barbarism in this indifference. I do not think it is so readily entertained by those who have a high sense of the privilege and value of life, as it is by those who have few objects in view beyond the gratifications of sense. To the former, courage becomes a matter of calculation. Men, when they prize their lives highly on account of the capacities they feel to be within them, are capable of acts of great bravery, provided an aim of high ambition is before them; but they will not encounter the chance of destruction for a straw: those, on the other hand, who have not learned to cast up accounts with themselves, will as soon face the cannon's mouth for the most trifling object as for the highest and grandest achievement. This, no doubt, is coolness; my own observation has induced me to hesitate as to whether I would accord to it the more dignified appellation of courage. In the majority of cases in which it occurs in the ranks of the British army, I am convinced the coolness is born of indifference rather than of bravery; and, in support of this opinion, I adduce some incidents I have witnessed myself.

Soon after the Allied armies had taken up their positions to the south of Sebastopol, green coffee began to be served out to the British troops. After a few days of hesitation and consideration, some adventurous fellows, in the intervals of their assaults upon the trenchworks of the fortress, and of their labours at the earthworks, planned an attack upon the scarcely less formidable green berries. They contrived to roast them in the tops of their cantens; and then set up extemporaneous coffee-mills, by rolling round shot over the dried berries laid upon pieces of stone. In this way they managed so far to crush the coffee as to make it defenceless to hot-water; but so soon as the rumour of this culinary success was noised abroad, cannon-balls suddenly rose in value: and when a Russian shot has been seen hurtling through the air, I have known a dozen stalwart fellows start for it, their eyes fixed upon it during its descent, as if it had been a cricket-ball, rather than a messenger of destruction and death; and lucky did he think himself who was nearest to it when it buried itself in the ground, perhaps just beneath his feet. At first, in their haste and inexperience, these amateur cricketers occasionally made the important mistake of running for a shell, in place of a round shot; and I have heard, in the excitement of the moment, a burst of laughter and shout of merriment echo through the air from their comrades, when the error has been pointed out by half-a-dozen of the adventurers being knocked over upon their backs, maimed and bleeding from the bursting of the deadly missile.

After a few weeks' practice, the men became very expert in distinguishing shells by their flight through the air, and took pretty good care not to run after them, when they did not present themselves unsought. But they still made very little of them when they did, just casting themselves down flat on the ground until the explosion was over, and the fragments were scattered. There was one huge shell, however, they never could get used to, which was fired from one particular mortar: this shell measured sixteen inches across, and contained eighteen pounds of gunpowder in its mischievous cavity. It was emitted from a raft that lay floating in the harbour, and occupied some forty seconds in its flight: first, a very perceptible whiff of white smoke burst out from the raft; then, on came the ponderous missile, turning over and over in its flight—whish—whish—whish—with an intermitting whistling sound; at last, down it pitched on the ground, with the force of fifty tons concentrated in its impact, bursting with a tremendous explosion at the instant. The fragments of this shell were scattered, when it

burst, more than 300 yards in all directions; it therefore never could be looked upon in the light of an agreeable neighbour—a quarter of a mile was by no means respectable as a distance from it. In consequence of its whistling note, this monster *horrendum mirabile* was christened Whistling Dick; and watchmen were set to look for the white whiff of smoke from the floating-raft, whenever parties were engaged upon the works within its range. The instant this was noticed, the alarm was raised, and the men rushed to the shelter of the nearest hole or embankment within their reach.

A hole or pit dug hastily into the ground is the first rudiment of a protective work. Several such lodgments are made during the hours of darkness, in advance of the foremost trench; and from four to six riflemen are sent to occupy each. One of these men is kept constantly on the look-out, above the edge of the pit, ready to take aim at any chance-object that is presented to his eye; the rest of the party while away the long hours, in the absence of any stirring excitement got up in their behalf by the enemy, the best way they can. They are completely sheltered from the effects of round shot, and even shells fall and burst within a yard of their lurking-place without working them any harm. If, however, one of these explosive spheres lights, by an unlucky chance, quite within the pit, it is certain destruction to the whole. Yet the watching the descent of the shells that fly in their direction, seems to afford rather a pleasurable excitement than otherwise. I have often heard remarks of a speculative kind ventured with the most perfect nonchalance, which had for their point the probable safe arrival of one of these deadly missiles, that seemed to be coming straight for the speculator down from the clouds. It is no unusual thing for small bets in tobacco to be laid as to how far off some shell will fall. Wagers as to the course overhead of round shot were amongst the common resources to which the little garrisons of these rifle-pits turned for amusement. The passage of a ball to the right or the left of the vertical often determined the pipe in which a last charge of the precious weed should be smoked. The scenes in these holes are, however, sometimes of the most painful kind. I remember once to have made one of a party of four in a pit as large as a round table, and six feet deep, and which was entirely isolated from all friendly aid during the continuance of daylight. Of this party, two were suffering from severe dysentery, a third was supporting a shattered arm, and the fourth had had his eye knocked out by a splinter produced by a cannon-ball.

Upon one occasion, I chanced to be in a pit advanced to within 80 or 100 yards of one of the Russian works. At this time our behaviour was so carefully watched, that the top of a feather could not be shewn for a moment above the embankment without a dozen rifle-balls whizzing past it. There was an officer with the party, but he was suffering so severely from dysentery that he lay for a long time in a fainting state, with his head on the knees of one of the men. While in this sad predicament, the fancy seized him that if he could have some hot coffee it would at once revive him. He expressed his wish; and it was found there was coffee in store, but no wood at hand for the fire. Observing this difficulty, one of the privates remarked that he would soon furnish the wood. He seized a pickaxe which had been used in the construction of the pit, and in an instant jumped from the hole. Without the slightest hurry in his deportment, he took his way to a tree that was prostrate on the ground about forty yards to the rear of the position, and, with his back to the Russians, began leisurely to pick off chips with his axe. The enemy appeared to be staggered at first by the coolness of his bearing, but very soon a leaden storm was whistling around him

in all directions. With perfect unconcern, however, he continued his operations; and, wonderful to say, was untouched by the missiles. The Russians became more angry and eager, and most probably fired with less than their usual care and precision. At length they laid a large gun upon the adventurous woodpecker, and three times a round shot rushed within a few inches of him. By this time, he conceived that he had made chips enough for his purpose; so he stooped down and gathered them together in the skirts of his long greatcoat, sauntered back through the leaden hail-storm, and dropped into the pit with his treasure unscathed, to the great surprise and infinite relief of his comrades, not seeming to have the slightest idea that he had done anything out of the usual way; and, indeed, I do not think the notion had ever been clearly presented to his mind what the risk was that he had volunteered to meet.

All the world knows that the naval service is quite as much marked by gallantry as the army. They also share with it the matter-of-fact indifference to personal risk I am just now more particularly alluding to. On board ship, matters of ordinary routine often go on under fire, just as if the vessel was hundreds of miles away from the enemy. Immediately before the attack upon the forts of Sebastopol, in which the fleet bore a part, an officer of the Rifles, who was invalided, had been sent on board one of the small steamers to recruit. One of the first incidents of his repose, however, was his going with the vessel into the engagement. She was placed in circumstances of peculiar risk, for she had on board a large quantity of shells, which she had recently brought for the general service of the fleet, and she was near the *Agamemnon* when the red-hot shot were striking her sides. She bore her share in the action, and was at last ordered out of fire by the admiral. The invalided officer was standing by the bridge when the captain of the ship came down from his station on the paddle-box, whence he had been directing the manœuvres. The steward came up to him at the instant, and touched his hat, with the announcement: 'Dinner is on table, sir.' The announcement was received with all due honour, and immediately afterwards the officers were at table discussing the merits of a fine boiled turkey, with the appropriate accompaniments, all of which had been prepared amidst the balls of the redoubtable fortress of Sebastopol.

THE TURKISH GENTRY AT HOME.

Ir travellers contradict each other flatly in matters of fact—in matters depending on the testimony of their own eyes and ears—it is no wonder they should take opposite sides in questions either of individual or national character. But here is something that puzzles us. If we were told that the Turks, like other people, had redeeming qualities, we could understand; but when an author gravely assures us that they have no positively bad qualities to redeem, we do not know what to make of it. Mr Trenery is that author. With him, the sole drawback in the character of a Turkish gentleman is the want of what he calls spirituality; while a Turkish lady would be perfection itself, were it not that her higher nature is obscured by a little ignorance. His book describes the life of the harem—the Turkish gentry literally at home; and if his pictures are coloured with rose-tints and gold, they are at least novel and amusing in no common degree.*

The Turkish gentleman, being a person of exquisite

taste, has of course a dwelling-house constructed on strictly æsthetical principles. The one into which we are first introduced is the property of a certain Mustapha Effendi, a quiet, gentlemanly Osmanli; it is on the edge of the Bosphorus, and is built in 'the pure, but exceedingly picturesque style of Turkish architecture.' On one side, the walls rise out of a lake hollowed in white marble, the material with which, likewise, the surrounding courts are paved; and in the midst of these is a fountain, with its thousand jets, and its multitudes of gold-fishes. The buildings are environed with orange-trees, palms, limes, and terraces of all sorts of gorgeous flowers. The morning-room is lighted by windows that open upon a terrace of flowers, interspersed with marble walks. In the centre of the terrace is a lofty ledge of artificial rocks, with a stream cascading over them, and falling from basin to basin to the number of twelve, the waters widening as they fall till they expand into a large sheet. 'Through the spray formed in the descent, the sunbeams shone; thus creating a perpetual rainbow, within whose fairy circle, you sat on a marble bench, surrounded by a carefully arranged group of shrubs and blossoms—all bathed, like yourself, in softened sunshine and prismatic colours.' The drapery of the room, covering the walls as well as the furniture, is of rich white satin damask; and the roof is of pale blue, ribbed with gold, and studded with gold stars. The saloon is a much longer room, 'hung with orange velvet, worked and fringed with gold; cushions of purple silk *crêpe*, brocaded with gold; tables covered with cloths woven throughout of gold and silver tissue; carpets of orange ground, through which run wreaths of pink, and green, and purple flowers; sofa, cushions and pillows of white satin; walls of plate-glass and gold-carving.'

This is the reception of the visitors: 'Our *caïque* drew up in the shadow of a row of plane-trees, where a path from Mustapha Effendi's house descended to the water. A slave saw our approach, and immediately ran indoors. A moment more, and Yasumi Hanoum, Mustapha's young wife, came running down the terrace to the *caïque*. My sister rose, and stepped on to the landing-place. Yasumi took her hand, and kissed the hem of her dress; the two being the greatest marks of affection which an Eastern lady can exhibit.

"Shekier Allâh!—God be praised!—you are come!" said she, in those soft melodious tones which make the voice of an Osmanli woman seem almost music. "You are very kind to come here to see me. I love you very much! and hope you will be able to love the simple Osmanli. May I love you?"

"How glad I shall be if you will! I hope you will love me dearly," said my sister, smiling affectionately upon her.

"And you will love me, too?"

"I shall only love you too much;" and she threw her arms around Yasumi's neck fondly, then raised her hand to her lips.

"You are very good. You shall have all my heart. Now, come; my husband will be impatient if we do not haste."

Here is the portrait of this young wife: 'Yasumi—Jasmine—Hanoum was a beautiful Circassian, of scarcely seventeen years. Her complexion was unsullied as the daylight; with a lovely pink on each cheek; and her skin was soft, delicately soft, as the interior

* *The City of the Crescent; with Pictures of Harem Life: or the Turks in 1854.* By Gordon O. L. Gordon Trenery, Esq. London: Skeet. 1855.

of a violet's leaf. Her nose was long, straight, and nobly formed. Her features were exceeding lovely; but the best of all was the expression of the soul's glory that shone through them so exaltingly. Her head was formed after the most magnificent Caucasian type, which few need be told is the same as—rather, it is the parent of—the English; and is the very highest organisation presented by the head of the human race. The forehead was wide and lofty; its flowing line was of genius and of grace, and expressed a regal dignity that stamped her one of nature's queens. Her hair was thick, dark, and glossy; but, after the fashion of Osmanli women, greatly disfigured by being cut short and square just below the ears.

In another room, still more gorgeous than the rest, the master of the house appears, sitting on a sofa, and almost hid in its cushions. On each side of him is one of his womankind, refilling his pipe, and presenting coffee to him. In a corner of the room is a young Greek singing to the accompaniment of her mandolin, while two dancing-girls keep time with their graceful movements and their castanets. 'The Selictar-Aga had gone in before us to announce our arrival, and also that we were on the way to the apartment in which our host sat. As we pushed aside the drapery from the door, he rose to a sitting posture, and fixed his eyes straight upon the carpet before him. Yasumi walked on, still leading my sister by the hand. When we had advanced about one-third of the length of the room towards him, he looked up with a sweet smile, which smile did not relax until Yasumi reached the cushion; then falling on one knee, she said:

"I bring you our friends again, my lord. Bid them welcome from their beautiful Frangistan!"

"Sel'lah Al'lah!—praise be to God!" said Mustapha. "Bourum—you are welcome—quite welcome. Tihat l'ahcin itt'ar gouzum—look graciously, and sit, my eyes!" said he to my sister.

The host is very hospitable in offering a pipe to his lady-visitor, but confesses his ignorance of the manners of Frangistan. The strangers are frankly permitted to introduce two of their friends, Mrs E—and her husband; and soon dinner is announced by a young Circassian, who comes tripping in, and falls on her knees before Mustapha.

"Mash'al'lah! I am told that your ways in Frangistan are peculiar," said Mustapha rising. "How you act on such an occasion in England, I know not; but in Roum—Turkey—all we do is to walk into the room one after another, the men taking precedence, as it is good and seemly to do."

"Will madam allow me?" said Mrs E—'s husband to my sister, at the same time presenting her his arm with a bend as stiff and formal as his own cravat.

"Al'lah okbur!—God is great!" cried Mustapha; "what am I to do?"

"Be my escort, Effendi," said Mrs E—, resting her arm on his rich pelisse.

"Then I will take Yasumi," I said; "with a proviso, that her husband shall not be jealous," I whispered aside.

"That, I am sure, he will not be!" said Yasumi, with sparkling eyes. "He has a soul purer than the light, and more loving than the daffodil for its own shadow. I love him, for he is good."

"And times are changing, even in Turkey, Hanoum."

Changing, indeed! 'Upon three silver trays, each placed on a stand eighteen inches high, the meal was to be served. Cushions of the most delicate pink and sky-blue satin, embroidered with gold and silver, and coloured silks, were strewed around them. Beside

every cushion lay two napkins of the finest white muslin, exquisitely wrought with silks, and golden birds, and flowers. A row of slaves, reaching from the furthest tray to the door, passed the dishes from hand to hand, up to the last one, who presented it to Yasumi, meekly kneeling on the carpet.

We all were led to a cushion, each by one of the attending slaves. The napkins were carefully spread upon our knees; warm rose-water was poured from a golden ewer over the hands of all. Then the repast commenced, every one helping himself from the dish in the centre, by taking from any part of it that was most pleasing to his eye.

The Osmanlis are very fond of variety in their food. The number of courses at a private dinner is generally fifteen, yet it does not last so long as the like meal in England. Seldom does any one take from the same dish twice. The slaves remove them as fast as they are done with, and put the next course upon the table. During the evening, the time is filled up at intervals, as elsewhere, with conversation. 'The sipping of coffee proceeded, the dances were kept up in full spirit, the music continued, and the massaljis still kept us laughing by their tales. Then the hour for repose came on, and all the household was hushed in sleep. Our beds were formed in the Osmanli fashion of cushions of orange-coloured silk, embroidered with gold, and filled with the softest down. Over us was lightly drawn a sheet of blue silk gauze, brilliantly marked by crimson stripes, and a coverlet of pale violet silk, worked with azure and golden flowers. Everything was made of the richest materials; and the beautiful silk gauze, airy as the rainbow, spiritual as an Italian summer-cloud, claimed our especial admiration of its truly Oriental luxury and magnificence.'

Such is a glimpse of the Osmanli gentlemen at home. We come now more especially to the ladies. 'The Osmanli ladies do not sit cross-legged, as is often supposed. The legs are folded beneath them, after the fashion of a person kneeling, and then sitting down upon the heels. The toes of the feet are turned inwards, and touch each other. Never do you see an Osmanli with her legs dangling over the edge of the cushion. To expose these parts of the person whilst sitting is considered indelicate.' The lady who calls forth this passing explanation now begins to ask the usual questions of an Osmanli woman on your first introduction to her at home. 'And the two-legged donkey,' adds our author, 'who presumes on her simplicity, by making any other than those courteous answers due from a gentleman to a lady, claiming his kindness and attention, will assuredly have his delinquency punished as it deserves. The Osmanli woman lives for nothing but love, and always finishes her salutations to a new friend, though she be but a slave freshly brought home to the house, by imploring her to love her.

"Look on me. Do you love me?" asked she.

"Not to love you would be to possess a very indifferent taste, or no taste at all."

"It is enough, and you are very kind to say it, light of my soul!" returned she. "Am I not pretty? What do you think of me?"

"You are lovelier than the daughters of Peristan; your beauty is more glorious than the noonday sky; your cheek is softer than the first flower of spring; your face is fairer than the snow-flake upon a mountain; your hands are like pearls; your eyes are like moons; your lips are like rubies, newly washed in the Boulak; your teeth are like diamonds from the valleys of Nishapore; your smile is softer than the light of the evening-star; and your presence is sweeter to the soul than a sunbeam breaking through a dark cloud! I have spoken, Kadeun." And I smiled a quiet smile in her innocent eyes, quite convinced that I had flattered strong enough to please even an Eastern lady.

"Inshal'lah!—I trust in God!—You are no Giaour!"

exclaimed she; "else, where did you learn to speak so like a good Muslim?"

"Have you never heard how wise the Giaours are? That they leave no lore untouched?"

"Mashallah! And I like to hear them talk, too! Adjaib ust! It is wonderful! I am told that the books they write are more beautiful than music, and fill the soul with love, till it enters the seventh Paradise. Is that true, sir?"

"In spirit, it is very nearly so.

"You are good, and I like you!" and, with a sweet simplicity, she went through the usual and graceful salaam, as I made the temina in acknowledgment of the compliment."

One curious effect of the seclusion in which a Turkish woman, whether married or unmarried, usually lives, is, that love-advances must always come from her. The man would not presume to notice her—and, besides, it would be vulgar to do so. Hence the language of flowers, of which the following specimen is given by our author:

"Am I not pretty?" and she holds up a white lotus.

He holds up a flower of Paradise. "You are lovelier than the houries in Korkham—Paradise."

"Do you love to look upon me?" asked by presenting a blush-rose.

"As the tiger-lily loves to gaze upon its own shadow."

"Can you love me?" and she shews a daffodil.

"As the daisy loves the sun!" and he turns towards her the flower in question.

"Would you die for my sake?" and she pulls a rosebud in two parts.

"I would submit my neck to the bowstring without a murmur," and he pulls off the head of a yellow geranium, or a violet.

"You are good, and I love you!" and she shews him a jasmine.

He makes the temina with the rapidity of lightning.

"Will you be my husband?" She pulls a hair from her head, and winds it round the jasmine.

He picks out a rose, and holds it with the flower pointing downwards to the earth.

"I cannot live without you; but if you refuse to have me, I shall die."

She takes a sunflower, and holds it by the side of the jasmine.

"Meet me to-night, at twilight:" now a lily is quickly added; "by the fountain:" a grape-tendrill, or a moss-rose; "in the kiosk:" a peach, or any delicate fruit that is in season; "near the wall:" or if she holds up a single green leaf plucked from one of the flowers, she says, "the kiosk is on the banks of the Bosphorus;" or, if she gathers her flowers into a bunch, and points the tip of her finger to the centre, it means, "the kiosk is in the midst of the garden." If she removes her finger, and then points a second time, "surrounded by trees." Then a lavender-bud, "there is nothing to fear." But a white rose is, "be as careful as you can." And then she readjusts her yashmak, which is, "There will be a mark where you should climb."

The mystery of the harem, however, is now fast disappearing, and with it, we trust, will disappear the unspirituality of the men and the ignorance of the women. 'One Osmanli allows his wives to come to meals with him in the salem-lik [men's apartments]; or he, and his children also, go to the harem, and take them there. Another Osmanli permits them to live in the salem-lik, or harem, indiscriminately: only, they must remember to make their hastiest flight on the announcement of that spectre—a man. But other Osmanlis are learning to sneer at all this nonsense, and suffer their wives or their daughters—after the fashion of those worthy Turks of whom I have written—to appear in the salem-lik, and talk to any of

mankind who may come there, whenever they will; only requiring that they shall never enter our presence without having their yashmaks strictly arranged, and being careful to see that some other person—a slave at least—is in the room.'

THE PENNY DAILY PAPER.

THIS is a novelty in our domestic experiences, and really it is a very pleasant one. There, each morning, as we enter our parlour to breakfast, we find the little inexpensive sheet ready for us, with all the news of the preceding day, and the latest intelligence transmitted by telegraph. Four hundred miles as we are from London, matters that have transpired there at six in the morning, are presented in this modest intelligencer by breakfast-time. We never could afford such a luxury or convenience before; and in the city of our residence, though as populous as Rome, there actually never was till now a local daily paper to be purchased. This new enjoyment in life we owe to the late law, making the stamp optional. Thousands must feel the blessing as we do, and thousands must be thankful for it, as we are. Let the old weekly and twice a week papers rail or grumble about the change as they may, the public grasps at the penny daily paper as something it needs, and will, if possible, have. It sees no necessity for taking three days' news in one sheet twice a week, instead of daily, in order to make as much as possible go under one penny-stamp, and that stamp, after all, perhaps not needed for any purpose the reader has to do with. It wishes to know *each morning* what is going on. If the stamp prevented it from obtaining this knowledge each morning, then it will think the stamp well away, how well assured soever the old large papers may have been of the virtues of that red mark.

Such of the penny daily papers as we have seen are respectably conducted. The trash which was uttered in anticipation of their necessarily proving low in tone, like many similarly priced papers in America, is in the course of being triumphantly falsified. The almost equal nonsense of the attempts to prove that a power of posting and re-posting was necessary to every particular news-sheet, and that the stamp was only the fair compensation for the postage (anything to keep on the stamp!), is undergoing similar exposure, in the fact, that the unstamped papers find their way all over the country by cheaper means than the post. But then, it is said, the penny papers cannot live. Not a week passes but the old papers have the pleasure of recording the death and burial of a few of them. That would be very serious, if true. But the failure of a number of rash speculations, out of the multitude, is not quite a proof that all the penny papers are to fail. What a powerful fact it is on the other side, that the *Manchester Examiner* (a paper which had the manliness to favour the abolition of the stamp) has attained for its daily form a circulation of 14,000, which would be considerably larger if the mechanical means existed for printing the sheet in proper time! It is possible, however, that the unstamped daily sheet will not succeed in many towns at a penny, for want of a sufficiently large population. If so, let them be tried at a somewhat higher rate. It was not implied in the demand for an unstamped press, that all the papers should thenceforth be published at a penny.

The public may felicitate itself on attaining anyhow an unstamped press. Public intelligence and opinion will now have unrestricted flow through the land, and the advance of the national mind will henceforth be at an accelerated rate. It is perhaps more wonderful that the blessing has been attained even now, than that it was withheld so long, considering that so many of the natural advocates of an unrestrained press were bound over by erroneous views of their own interests to oppose the measure. Every such acquisition by the

public is indeed a wonder, for even liberals and political economists, as we see, cannot, in their own case, get over the idea, that the public, somehow, is made for the individual trader, not the individual trader for the public.

SUN-FISH OR BASKING SHARK.

Some twenty-five years since, the capture of this valuable fish was prosecuted very successfully from Innis Boffin and the vicinity of Westport, at which town, as well as New-port, there were works erected for frying out the oil. About that date, as much as five pipes of oil of 120 gallons were received by one Dublin house alone per season. It has much decreased of late years, which is attributable rather to the decline of the means of pursuit than to the absence of the fish, as it is seen every year in large numbers on the distant banks, and occasionally close to the shore, in packs of twenty-five or thirty, in very fine weather. There were four taken at Galway this year, and many were seen in the vicinity of the Arran Islands. The average size is about 25 feet long by 18 feet in circumference in the largest part, the shape resembling a shark. The liver has hitherto been considered the only valuable part, averaging thirty hundredweights, and containing about 180 gallons of fine oil, second only to sperm, and sells from 4s. to 6s. per gallon. The carcass, which may be estimated at from four to five tons, is of a gelatinous character, consequently of great value: *it is now thrown away as useless.* Neither skill nor courage is required in the capture; it being of a sluggish nature, and literally presenting its most vulnerable part to the harpoon.—*Symonds's Observations on the Fisheries of the West Coast of Ireland.*

EMIGRATION TO AMERICA.

The Emigration Commissioners report that 53,183 emigrants landed at Quebec in 1854, being upwards of 16,000 more than in 1853; a greater number, indeed, than in any previous year except 1847. Of these, 35,132 were of British origin; and it is remarked that the disposition to remain and settle in Canada, instead of pushing on to the States, is stronger now than formerly. Another noticeable fact is, that since 1851 the emigration from Ireland has comprised more women than men. Last year, the excess of females was 2209. The return for New York shews 313,747 emigrants landing at that port, being 30,000 more than in 1853. Still, we find that the number from Great Britain and Ireland was 32,731 fewer than in the former year. Germany contributed an unusual influx, or there would have been a great falling off. In connection with this, there is the fact that pauperism is on the decrease in Ireland—take the Ennis Union, for example:—In 1851, the number of paupers was 3677; in 1853, it had fallen to 1793; and in the last week of last July, to 825, with a still diminishing tendency. Pauperism has diminished also through the whole of South Wales.

VOICES OF THE DUMB.

It is a curious fact that many animals which are naturally dumb, in the widest sense of the word, are possessed of a power of producing sounds, by the use of some external organ or foreign instrument, that forms a very convenient substitute for a natural tongue. I have observed this of the goat-chaffer, which, whenever taken, utters a shrill shriek of fright, by rubbing its chest against its wing-shells and the upper part of its abdomen; and of the death-watch, that produces its measured, and, to the superstitious, alarming strokes, by striking its horny frontlet against the bedpost, or any other hard substance in which it takes its stand. The tick-watch is an insect of a different order, but armed with a similar apparatus, and makes a noise by the same means, like the ticking of a watch, from the old wood or decayed furniture in which it resides. And it is a singular circumstance, which I shall merely glance at in passing, that some species of the wood-pecker, in the breeding-season, in consequence of the feebleness of its natural voice, makes use of a similar kind of call, by strong reiterated strokes of the bill against a dead sonorous branch of a tree. The most astonishing instance, however, of sound excited in this manner, is that

made by two species of Italian grasshoppers—the *Cicada plebeja* and *C. orn.* The music of these insects, which is confined to the male, is produced by a singular apparatus, that consists of several winding cells under the body, separated by different membranes, and opening externally by two narrow valves. In the centre of these cells is contained a scaly sonorous triangle, and exterior to them are two vigorous muscles, by the action of which the cells are supplied with air through one of the valves, and so powerfully reverberate it against the triangle, as to produce the notes of which the grasshopper's song consists, and which is so loud, that a single insect hung in a cage has almost drowned the voices of a large company.—*John Mason Good.*

THE LITTLE FOOT-PAGE.

No jewel in his cap he wore, no plume in pagelike pride;
No lute upon his back he bore, no dagger by his side;
He never had long silken hose, or wore a satin blouse;
Nor did he ever bear a rose on either of his shoes.
In ladies' bowers he ne'er was seen; he ne'er sang ballads
anyhow;
His name was not Alphonse, Eugene, Lucentio, or Ascanio.

But the names which to Pages were given of yore,
And the name of the Page I am speaking of, bore
As much likeness as Sukey to Eleanore,

Or Betty to Phyllis and Lalage;
From such Pages he was just as different as
A page out of Butler's *Hudibras*
From a page out of Butler's *Analogy*.

He was clad in a totally different way,
In the exquisite taste of the present day,
In a light little jacket of rifle-green,
Whereupon three bright rows of gilt buttons were seen—
Every button most sadly suggestive to me
Of amphibious fashion and finery.
And, to make the difference greater still,
This little Foot-Page's name was Bill.
His duties, so far as I'm able to tell,
Were to open the door and to answer the bell;
To fetch the books from Hookham's; to look
At his master's letters, and tease the cook;
To walk after his mistress to church, and wait
At table; and meet, I may likewise state,
The collateral claims of the knives and plate;
And to fill, to the family's pride and joy,
The place of a man at the price of a boy.

I knew not whether to smile or sigh
At my friend's Procrustean philosophy,
But I know that I very much longed to say:
'Pitch the Page to Old Harry, dear madam, I pray;
He's a sham and pretence: if you can't keep a man,
Get some "neat-handed Phyllis" instead, till you can;
And boldly abandoning "Buttons," employ
An "Anne Page" instead of a "lubberly boy."'
A. W.

MOVEMENT OF A GLACIER.

Assuming, roughly, the length of a glacier to be twenty miles, and the velocity of its progression (*assumed* uniform) one-tenth of a mile, or 500 feet, the block which is *now* being discharged from its surface on the terminal moraine may have started from its rocky origin in the reign of Charles I! The glacier history of 200 years is revealed in the interval; and a block, ten times the volume of the greatest of the Egyptian monoliths, which has just commenced its march, will see out the course of six generations of men ere its pilgrimage too be accomplished, and it is laid low and motionless in the common grave of its predecessors.—*From Forbes's Tour of Mont Blanc.*

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by JAMES FRASER, 14 D'Olier Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.